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INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1034  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0879  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL  
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S E C R E T PORT AU PRINCE 000847

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR  
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)  
TREASURY FOR MAUREEN WAFER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2010  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [KDEM](#) [KCRM](#) [ASEC](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: SUSPECTED DRUG-TRAFFICKER WINS SENATE PRESIDENCY

REF: PAUP 828

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4(b).

¶1. (S) Haiti's senators (reftel) on May 11 elected Joseph Lambert senate president. Lambert, who represents President-elect Peval's L'Espwa party from the Southeast Department, is a native of the departmental capital Jacmel and widely rumored to be a leading narco-trafficker in the region. Lambert is a known associate of Jean-Marie Fourel Celestin, who was former head of palace security under Aristide and is currently serving a drug sentence in Miami. Political contacts in Jacmel told poloff in January that Lambert and L'Espwa deputy candidate Patrick Dumond, who also won election to parliament, were two of the best-known narco-traffickers in the city, distributing money for favors and engaging in vote buying. Lambert served as deputy from Jacmel in the early 1990's. SIMO and DEA Port-au-Prince report that information on file reflects that he is suspected of association with known drug traffickers in Jacmel.

¶2. (C) Presidential advisors Alix Fils-Aime and Robert Manuel told Polcouns on May 10 that they were unhappy with the prospect of Lambert's election but that Preval could not directly interfere in senate affairs. Fils-Aime told poloff in a conversation on the evening of May 11 that the Preval team was "deeply disappointed" with the choice of Lambert, but stressed that Preval would insist on probity in his dealings with the parliament. Fils-Aime signalled that he was personally distressed that Preval had not done more to intervene in the selection of the senate president. Interim Prime Minister Latortue also expressed concern in a conversation with the Ambassador on the evening of May 11 but said that Haiti would have to go through democratic growing pains -- and this might be one of them, unfortunately.

¶3. (C) The Senators also elected Pierre-Louis Jean-Joseph (OPL-Grande-Anse) to the number two "questeur" (management and finance) position and Evelyne Cheron (Lavalas- West) to the third ranking vice-presidency. Deputies elected Pierre Erice Jean-Jacques (Lavalas-West) chamber of deputies president and Maxeau Balthazar (Fusion-Southeast) questeur. Haitian contacts report that Jean-Jacques, who owns a "clarin" (low quality rum) factory in the lower Delmas area of Port-au-Prince, is also suspected of irregular business

dealings.

13. (C) Comment. It appears that Lambert has some measure of political talent, having successfully canvassed within his own party and other senators. The Southeast branch of L'Espwa has always been cited as the best financed, and no doubt ambitious L'Espwa leaders spread some of their money around to help their fellow party members in the second round, especially after Aristide declined to campaign on behalf of individuals, and reportedly also assisted some candidates from other parties. Rumors already abound regarding outright vote buying by Lambert: several senate candidates complained publicly and privately before the elections that senators from the department would not have the financial means to carry out their duties. Preval had taken pains to distance himself from individual L'Espwa members with whom he is no direct relationship -- Preval's personal favorite from Jacmel, Frantz Large, did not win a senate seat -- but he will doubtless need to deal with the senate leader from his own party. At the very least, Lambert's election will complicate efforts to enhance the stature of the parliament.

SANDERSON